

Performance Standards (reported in Lexile® measures)

Tests. North Carolina READY End-of-Grade Reading and End-of-Course English II Assessments (Edition 4).

Test Publisher. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Test Information. The 2013 North Carolina READY End of Grade Language Arts/Reading Assessments and End-of-Course English II Assessment are designed to measure students' proficiency on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2010. The EOG assessments are administered annually to students in Grades 3 through 8. The English II assessment is administered to students enrolled in English II (generally Grade 10). Assessment results will be used both for school and district accountability under the NC READY Accountability Model and for Federal reporting purposes (NCDPI, 2013b).

Method. The Lexile Linking Study was conducted in 2013 in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in Grades 3, 5, 7, 8 and English II. A linear linking methodology was used: (A) across grades for Grades 3 through 8 since these are on a vertical scale; and (B) within course for the English II End-of-Course Assessment.

Performance Standards. Performance standards provide a common meaning of test scores throughout a state or nation concerning what is expected at various levels of competence. In October 2013, the North Carolina Department of Instruction established four achievement levels: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 (NCDPI, 2013a). In March 2014, the North Carolina Department of Instruction revised those four levels to establish five achievement levels: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5.

As an example, the five achievement levels for the Grade 3 NC READY EOG Reading Assessment are (NCDPI, 2014):

Achievement Level 1:

Students performing at this level have **limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) Reading Standards for Literature as assessed by referring to the text when asking and answering questions; recounting stories and determining a central message, explaining how the message is conveyed through key details in the text; describing characters and explaining how their actions contribute to the plot; and determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, especially literal and nonliteral language. They will need academic support to engage successfully in this content area.

Students have limited command of informational text, showing inconsistency in referring to the text when asking and answering questions; identifying the main idea and finding the most important details that strengthen the main idea; describing the relationship between events, ideas, concepts, or steps using appropriate language; determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; demonstrating understanding through information gained from illustrations and words; and describing connections between sentences and paragraphs.

Students demonstrate limited command of language when determining the meaning of a word within the context of a sentence and distinguishing between literal and nonliteral meanings. They rarely demonstrate the use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and will need academic support to engage successfully in this content area.

Achievement Level 2:

Students performing at this level have **partial command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Standards for Literature* as assessed by referring to the text when asking and answering questions; recounting stories and determining a central message, explaining how the message is conveyed through key details in the text; describing characters and explaining how their actions contribute to the plot; and determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, especially literal and nonliteral language. They will likely need academic support to engage successfully in this content area.

Students have partial command of informational text, showing inconsistency in referring to the text when asking and answering questions; identifying the main idea and finding the most important details that strengthen the main idea; describing the relationship between events, ideas, concepts, or steps using appropriate language; determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; demonstrating understanding through information gained from illustrations and words; and describing connections between sentences and paragraphs.

Students demonstrate partial command of language when determining the meaning of a word within the context of a sentence and distinguishing between literal and nonliteral meanings. They inconsistently demonstrate the use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and will likely need academic support to engage successfully in this content area.

Achievement Level 3:

Students performing at this level have a **sufficient command** of grade-level knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Standards for Literature* assessed at grade 3, but they may need academic support to engage successfully in this content area in the next grade level. They are prepared for the next grade level but are not yet on track for college-and-career readiness without additional academic support.

Achievement Level 4:

Students performing at this level have **solid command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Standards for Literature* as assessed by referring to the text when asking and answering questions; recounting stories and determining a central message, explaining how the message is conveyed through key details in the text; describing characters and explaining how their actions contribute to the plot; and determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, especially literal and nonliteral language. They are academically prepared to engage successfully in this content area.

Students have solid command of informational text, showing consistency in referring to the text when asking and answering questions; identifying the main idea and finding the most important details that strengthen the main idea; describing the relationship between events, ideas, concepts, or steps using appropriate language; determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; demonstrating understanding through information gained from illustrations and words; and describing connections between sentences and paragraphs.

Students demonstrate solid command of language when determining the meaning of a word within the context of a sentence and distinguishing between literal and nonliteral meanings. They demonstrate consistent use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and are academically prepared to engage successfully in this content area.

Achievement Level 5:

Students performing at this level have **superior command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Standards for Literature* as assessed by referring to the text when asking and answering questions; recounting stories and determining a central message, explaining how the message is conveyed through key details in the text; describing characters and explaining how their actions contribute to the plot; and determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used

in a text, especially literal and nonliteral language. They are academically well-prepared to engage successfully in this content area.

Students have superior command of informational text, showing consistency in referring to the text when asking and answering questions; identifying the main idea and finding the most important details that strengthen the main idea; describing the relationship between events, ideas, concepts, or steps using appropriate language; determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; demonstrating understanding through information gained from illustrations and words; and describing connections between sentences and paragraphs.

Students demonstrate superior command of language when determining the meaning of a word within the context of a sentence and distinguishing between literal and nonliteral meanings. They demonstrate exemplary use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and are academically well-prepared to engage successfully in this content area.

The five achievement levels for NC READY EOC English II Assessment are (NCDPI, 2014):

Achievement Level 1:

Students performing at this level have **limited command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* Reading Standards for Literature as assessed by supporting analysis of the text with textual evidence; determining and analyzing the development and refinement of a theme or idea throughout a text; summarizing a text objectively; analyzing the development, interaction, and contribution of characters in a text; determining meanings of words or phrases in a text; analyzing the impact of word choice on meaning and tone; analyzing how authors' choices create literary effects, such as tension; analyzing point of view and cultural experiences in literature from outside the U.S., drawing on world literature. They will need academic support to engage successfully in this content area.

Students have limited command of informational text, showing inconsistency in supporting analysis of the text with textual evidence; determining a theme or idea and how it's revealed and refined throughout a text; summarizing a text objectively; analyzing the order and manner a key element is introduced and explored in a text; determining figurative, connotative, and technical meanings of words or phrases in a text; analyzing the placement and contribution of particular sections of text, including larger portions of texts; determining an author's point of view/purpose and its presentation.

Students demonstrate limited command of language when determining and clarifying the meaning of words by using the context, identifying word changes that alter meaning, consulting reference materials, and/or verifying initial thought of word meaning; demonstrating an understanding of figures of speech, analyzing their contribution to the text, and analyzing subtle variation between similar terms. They rarely demonstrate the use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and will need academic support to engage successfully in this content area.

Achievement Level 2:

Students performing at this level have **partial command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* Reading Standards for Literature as assessed by supporting analysis of the text with textual evidence; determining and analyzing the development and refinement of a theme or idea throughout a text; summarizing a text objectively; analyzing the development, interaction, and contribution of characters in a text; determining meanings of words or phrases in a text; analyzing the impact of word choice on meaning and tone; analyzing how authors' choices create literary effects, such as tension; analyzing point of view and cultural experiences in literature from outside the U.S., drawing on world literature. They will likely need academic support to engage successfully in this content area.

Students have partial command of informational text, showing inconsistency in supporting analysis of the text with textual evidence; determining a theme or idea and how it's revealed and refined throughout a text; summarizing a text objectively; analyzing the order and manner a key element is introduced and

explored in a text; determining figurative, connotative, and technical meanings of words or phrases in a text; analyzing the placement and contribution of particular sections of text, including larger portions of texts; determining an author's point of view/purpose and its presentation.

Students demonstrate partial command of language when determining and clarifying the meaning of words by using the context, identifying word changes that alter meaning, consulting reference materials, and/or verifying initial thought of word meaning; demonstrating an understanding of figures of speech, analyzing their contribution to the text, and analyzing subtle variation between similar terms. They demonstrate knowledge of standard English conventions: grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and/or spelling. However, they demonstrate inconsistent use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and will likely need academic support to engage successfully in this content area.

Achievement Level 3:

Students performing at this level have a **sufficient command** of knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Standards for Literature* but may need academic support to engage successfully in more rigorous studies in this content area. They are prepared for further studies in this content area but are not yet on track for college-and-career readiness without additional academic support.

Achievement Level 4:

Students performing at this level have **solid command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Standards for Literature* as assessed by supporting analysis of the text with textual evidence; determining and analyzing the development and refinement of a theme or idea throughout a text; summarizing a text objectively; analyzing the development, interaction, and contribution of characters in a text; determining meanings of words or phrases in a text; analyzing the impact of word choice on meaning and tone; analyzing how authors' choices create literary effects, such as tension; analyzing point of view and cultural experiences in literature from outside the U.S., drawing on world literature. They are academically prepared to engage successfully in this content area.

Students have solid command of informational text, showing consistency in supporting analysis of the text with textual evidence; determining a theme or idea and how it's revealed and refined throughout a text; summarizing a text objectively; analyzing the order and manner a key element is introduced and explored in a text; determining figurative, connotative, and technical meanings of words or phrases in a text; analyzing the placement and contribution of particular sections of text, including larger portions of texts; determining an author's point of view/purpose and its presentation.

Students demonstrate solid command of language when determining and clarifying the meaning of words by using the context, identifying word changes that alter meaning, consulting reference materials, and/or verifying initial thought of word meaning; demonstrating an understanding of figures of speech, analyzing their contribution to the text, and analyzing subtle variation between similar terms. They demonstrate command of standard English conventions: grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. They demonstrate consistent use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and are academically prepared to engage successfully in this content area.

Achievement Level 5:

Students performing at this level have **superior command** of the knowledge and skills contained in the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading Standards for Literature* as assessed by supporting analysis of the text with textual evidence; determining and analyzing the development and refinement of a theme or idea throughout a text; summarizing a text objectively; analyzing the development, interaction, and contribution of characters in a text; determining meanings of words or phrases in a text; analyzing the impact of word choice on meaning and tone; analyzing how authors' choices create literary effects, such as tension; analyzing point of view and cultural experiences in literature from outside the U.S., drawing on world literature. They are academically well-prepared to engage successfully in this content area.

Students have superior command of informational text, showing consistency in supporting analysis of the text with textual evidence; determining a theme or idea and how it's revealed and refined throughout a text; summarizing a text objectively; analyzing the order and manner a key element is introduced and explored in a text; determining figurative, connotative, and technical meanings of words or phrases in a text; analyzing the placement and contribution of particular sections of text, including larger portions of texts; determining an author's point of view/purpose and its presentation.

Students demonstrate superior command of language when determining and clarifying the meaning of words by using the context, identifying word changes that alter meaning, consulting reference materials, and/or verifying initial thought of word meaning; demonstrating an understanding of figures of speech, analyzing their contribution to the text, and analyzing subtle variation between similar terms. They demonstrate purposeful use of standard English conventions, including grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. They demonstrate exemplary use of grade-appropriate vocabulary and are academically well-prepared to engage successfully in this content area.

Table 1. NC READY EOG Reading/NC READY EOC English II performance standards in the Lexile measure.

Grade	Limited Command	Partial Command	Sufficient Command	Solid Command	Superior Command
3	555L and Below	560L to 720L	725L to 790L	795L to 1025L	1030L and Above
4	720L and Below	725L to 860L	865L to 930L	935L to 1215L	1220L and Above
5	815L and Below	820L to 980L	985L to 1050L	1055L to 1305L	1310L and Above
6	790L and Below	795L to 1000L	1005L to 1070L	1075L to 1330L	1335L and Above
7	860L and Below	865L to 1070L	1075L to 1140L	1145L to 1425L	1430L and Above
8	955L and Below	960L to 1165L	1170L to 1260L	1265L to 1520L	1525L and Above
English II	1035L and Below	1040L to 1220L	1225L to 1300L	1305L to 1665L	1670L and Above

Test Administration. The NC READY EOG Grades 3-8 tests will be administered within the last 10 instructional days of the school year. The NC READY EOC English II test will be administered within the final 10 instructional days of the school year for year-long courses and within the final five instructional days of the semester for semester courses.

References

North Carolina Department of Public Education. (2014). *Achievement Level Information*. Retrieved on March 20, 2014 from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/shared/achievelevel/>

North Carolina Department of Instruction. (2013a). *Accountability Services Achievement Levels*. Retrieved on October 31, 2013 from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2013b). *Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts: North Carolina Assessment Specifications Summary, READY EOG Assessments, Grades 3-8 READY EOC English II Assessments*. Retrieved on October 31, 2013 from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/acre/assessment/ela.pdf>